



Program Review Self-Study Guidelines, Introduction, & Purpose

Student Affairs is committed to continuous programmatic improvement and must systematically assess, acknowledge, and appropriately respond to new challenges, identify potential opportunities, and routinely strive to enhance our programs and services. The implementation of the Student Affairs program self-study guidelines detailed in this document is an important step towards achieving many of Student Affairs' goals.

Key Guiding Principles

The Student Affairs Program Review process is designed to enhance organizational performance via the systematic review of data pertaining to department activities, service delivery and use, resource management, and contributions to the advancement of the Student Affairs' mission and the University's strategic plan.

More specifically, the purposes of program review are:

- Facilitate systematic reflection and documentation within Student Affairs' departments on organizational performance;
- Provide evidence of the excellence and effectiveness of the departments' programs, activities, services, and operations;
- Foster a contemporary understanding of Auburn University's students' characteristics, needs, and experiences;
- Assess departments' effectiveness with respect to contributing to student learning and/or program outcomes;
- Encourage strategic thinking about departments' plans for the future;
- Define ways, primarily within existing resources, that departments can continue to improve in the quality of their programs, services, activities, and operations; and
- Identify obstacles that inhibit departments from achieving desired goals and develop an action plan for managing these obstacles.

The Student Affairs' vision, mission, values and goals provide the foundation for the Student Affairs Program Review Self-Study process.

The program review guidelines also reflect the values that have historically guided Student Affairs' assessment activities. More specifically, the guidelines outlined in this document:

- Maintain a focus on connecting Student Affairs activities to the broader institutional academic mission and strategic priorities.
- Demonstrate a respect for students from all backgrounds and communities;

- Highlight the importance of including student voices in the process and products of assessment;
- Underscore the value of identifying and assessing student learning and development outcomes;
- Promote the effective use of organizational resources; and
- Prioritize the development of quality programs that meet students' ever-changing needs.

The primary reason for conducting program reviews is to ensure the continuation of high quality programs and services in Student Affairs and to make sure that our departments are central to the role and mission, priorities, and strategic goals of Student Affairs and Auburn University.

Program Review Budget

The Student Affairs Program Review Self-Study process will require a commitment of time and resources from everyone involved. It is assumed that the financial support for all steps in the program review process will be absorbed at the department level. If the program review process poses financial hardship for a department, the director should submit a program self-study budget proposal to the supervising AVP who will discuss the request with the SVPSA. Departments reporting directly to the SVPSA will submit the budget proposal directly to the SVPSA. Budget requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Throughout the program self-study cycle, the Director of Assessment & Strategic Planning and Assessment & Strategic Planning staff members will serve as the facilitators of the process and as a resource to the department.

Program Review Cycle

Student Affairs' department reviews will normally occur on a six-year cycle. The University's academic program reviews are also conducted on a six-year cycle. When possible, the schedule will be coordinated with other review and accreditation activities. When circumstances warrant, a request to extend or postpone a scheduled program self-study may be submitted in writing to the appropriate AVP or directly to the SVPSA if the department does not report to an AVP. The SVPSA and AVP will review this request and respond to the director of the department. In situations where the program review findings indicated very serious problems in the department, it may be added back into the schedule for re-review on an accelerated basis to ensure that the identified problems have been addressed. In addition, at any time, the SVPSA or AVP may request that a department undergo program review ahead of their normally scheduled review.

Program Review Process and Timeline

Program Review self-study begins in May when the department receives written notification from the Director of Assessment & Strategic Planning that a department is scheduled for review. The process ends no later than May of the following year with the submission of the department's relevant documents submitted by the Director of Assessment & Strategic Planning to the AVP and SVPSA.

Although the suggested 1-year timeline is intended to structure and standardize the review process, the actual time needed to complete each program review step may vary according to the department and the unique needs of each review (e.g. First Year Experience/Orientation will

need to reference the Program Review Cycle, identify when the department will undergo review, and begin compiling artifacts/evidence in advance of the launch of the official program review in May - a time that will be especially busy for this department due to hosting Camp War Eagle in the summer.)

The suggested Student Affairs Program Review timeline is as follows:

Step 1: Pre-Review Preparation

- I. Notification in Writing to Department(s) Scheduled for Review:** Using the established six-year review calendar, departments that are slated for review in the coming academic year will be formally notified in writing via a letter from the Director of Assessment & Strategic Planning. The letter of notification will include a copy of the Student Affairs Program Review Guidelines and other specific information regarding the review process.
- II. Department Review Orientation Meeting Scheduled/Held:** The Director of Assessment & Strategic Planning with the appropriate AVP, if available, will meet with the staff of the department undergoing review in order to discuss the review process, answer questions and provide clarification about the process and timeline, and to help create a participatory process of program review in which all staff members are engaged and involved.
- III. Identification of the Self-Study Protocol:** The program review self-study protocol is selected by the director of the department in consultation with the AVP and Director of Assessment & Strategic Planning. Following are the three primary choices with respect to the self-study format:
 - A. Any mandated or optional professional accreditation processes: Program review is intended to provide Student Affairs departments an opportunity to evaluate their programs and services to ensure that they are ready and able to meet the needs of an ever-changing student body. However, certain departments are required or encouraged to participate in accreditation procedures specific to their functional area. In an effort to reduce unnecessary duplication of effort and help ease the overall workload of preparing for agency accreditation, the self-study or department profile component of an accreditation process may be used to fulfill some or all of the Student Affairs Program Review Self-Study expectations.
 - B. Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS): CAS “has been the pre-eminent force for promoting standards in student affairs, student services, and student development programs since its inception in 1979. For the ultimate purpose of fostering and enhancing student learning, development, and achievement and in general to promote good citizenship,”

CAS provides a set of industry-approved standards and self-assessment guidelines for approximately 45 functional areas.

1. Those Student Affairs' departments for which CAS standards and guidelines exist may choose to utilize the CAS Self-Assessment Guide (SAG) as the frame for the self-study review process and report. Others, may decide to work from the CAS General Standards.
2. Departments that select to use the CAS standards or CAS General Standards should be mindful of all items listed in the standards; this includes those "must" statements in bold-face type as well as the "should" statements in light-face type. While the CAS Self-Assessment Guides only include and review the "must" statements in bold, departments are required to include all items in the narrative for Program Review.
3. It is important to note that although the CAS Self-Assessment Guides include worksheets and overview questions intended to facilitate the compilation of reviewer ratings for each of the CAS criterion measures, these completed worksheets and short answer responses do not fulfill the Auburn University's Student Affairs Program Review self-study report expectations. Rather the information and insights gleaned from the CAS self-assessment process should inform the development of a comprehensive and coherent self-study narrative that addresses the domains outlined in the CAS Standards and Guidelines.

C. Industry Standards and Guidelines for Self-Study: If there is a set of standards and/or guidelines that are published by a representative, governing body, or professional association for the department's area of Student Affairs or for the types of services that the office provides, the department may propose them as the protocol for the self-study portion of the department's program review process. Please submit the complete description of standards and guidelines for self-study to the appropriate AVP and Director of Assessment & Strategic Planning for consideration.

Auburn University Student Affairs Program Review Self-Study Guidelines: These criteria are intended to provide a structure for the review and should be augmented by whatever information is deemed necessary to create an effective self-assessment using any of the three options outlined above. General areas include:

1. Department Mission, Purpose, and Functions
2. Strategic Position and Planning
3. Analysis of Previous Annual Assessments
4. Organizational Resources
5. Gauging Department Performance and Effectiveness
6. Summary of Findings

IV. Data Audit

Each department undergoing review will conduct an audit of all data and information resources available to assist and inform the program review process. The department is expected to create a summary table or matrix highlighting the key performance indicators monitored by the department or at a minimum, identifying the data available for self-study. Data from the department level, the institutional level, and any external activities should also be included in the audit. In addition to the summary table, as part of the pre-review preparation, the Data Audit team is expected to prepare brief comments regarding the evidence that has been collected in support of the self-study protocol standards. This activity will need to take place before the self-study review panel has orientation training and begins their panel review.

V. Formation of the Self-Study Review Panel

The director of the department, in consultation with the AVP and Director of Assessment & Strategic Planning, will identify and invite people to serve as members of the self-study team. The team should include all units and levels of the department, with no more than six people. One of the six members selected shall be appointed by the director of the department as the self-study panel chair. All members should be able to devote time to the process including attending meetings and contributing to the report. Following are guidelines with respect to the membership of the Self-Study Review Panel:

- A. External Members: In order to provide a more objective yet informed viewpoint, one member of the Self-Study Review Panel must be external to the department. Some suggestions for this member include:
 1. If an advisory panel/council exists for the department, it is suggested that representation from this group be included on the Self-Study Review Panel.
 2. In an effort to make the Student Affairs Program Review process as collaborative as possible across departments, directors may consider fellow directors of Student Affairs departments slated to undergo program review in future or past cycles as a potential external member of the Self-Study Review Panel.
 3. The collaboration between Student Affairs and our colleagues in academic affairs and across campus is a priority for the advancement of the Student Affairs strategic plan and a critical element in our ability to effectively serve students. As such, directors are encouraged to consider inviting faculty or colleagues from the Colleges/Schools and/or inviting colleagues

who are partners from other parts of campus to serve as an external member/s of the Self-Study Review Panel.

- B. Student Members: Students are the primary constituents of our efforts. Thus, the Self-Study Review Panel must include at least one student. It is advisable that the student(s) have experience with the department (e.g., frequent user, student employee, intern, etc.).
- C. Internal Members: There are no restrictions on the identification and inclusion of internal members for the Self-Study Review Panel.
- D. External Off-Campus Members: The outlined program review process is a self-study. It does not include the element of external review by a panel or team. Inclusion of an external off-campus review panel member to the self-study panel is permitted, however, at the discretion of the department.

Step 2: Department Self-Study Narrative Report

The department self-study provides the basis for the entire review process. It represents a valuable opportunity for the department to make a candid assessment of itself and to consider future directions and opportunities for improvement that would strengthen the department. The self-study panel for each department undergoing review will prepare a self-study report using as its organizing framework the criteria and questions identified in the protocol selected as part of the pre-review preparation.

The purpose of the Department Self-Study Report is to:

- A. Outline the department's objectives, priorities, resources, programs and strategic plans as well as its position within Student Affairs and the University.
- B. Address how well the department performs in relation to its mission, goals and strategic plans.
- C. Define ways, primarily within existing resources, that the department can continue to improve in the quality of its programs, services, activities, and operations.
- D. Provide evidence of the excellence and effectiveness of its programs, activities, services and operations.

The self-study narrative and supporting documentation should fulfill the purposes outlined above. The specific format and content of the report will be determined by the particular self-study framework selected by the Self-Study Review Panel. The report will be assembled using Anthology's Program Review (Compliance Assist) software.

Self-Study Report Submission Guidelines:

- A. While the director of the department under review has latitude with respect to decisions regarding the preparation of the self-study report, the final report should represent the input of all members of the Self-Study Review Panel. As such, the department is encouraged to create a system in which the Panel is able to provide feedback on a draft of the document.
- B. While there is no firm limit with respect to the length of the report, it would be challenging to address fully the criteria of most self-study protocols in less than 10-15 pages of narrative (exclusive of appendices).
- C. Departments need to submit a draft of the narrative report and Executive Summary to the Director of Assessment & Strategic Planning prior to submitting the final report being sent to the AVP, SVPSA, and the Review Panel. Incomplete reports will be returned to the department with detailed feedback on how the report is to be revised.
- D. Once approved, the director will submit the final self-study report in electronic format to the Director of Assessment & Strategic Planning, who will be responsible for sending the final self-study report (along with the Executive Summary) to the AVP and SVPSA.

Step 3: Executive Summary

Once the self-study process has been completed by the department and the Self-Study Review Panel, the final step of this process is to create an Executive Summary. A template for this summary is provided in order to provide consistency across departments. Reports should follow the Student Affairs [Brand Style Guide](#), use Times New Roman 12pt font, and include page numbers at bottom right. A standard template for the report including the cover page is provided here <https://auburn.box.com/s/wyg34c0j33p5o3pu8hmhuen6vtvlx0y3>.

Key components of the Executive Summary are as follows:

1) Department Introduction

- a) Department History
- b) Organizational Framework
- c) Constituents Served
- d) Department Strategic Plan
- e) Program Review Process
- f) Benchmarking
- g) Self-Study Review Panel Members

2) Summary of Relevant Data

- a) Overall Judgment Rating, rating of each self-study protocol standard
- b) Judgment Rating Rationale, statement of how/why each item received the judgment rating

- c) Follow-up Actions, specific statements regarding follow-up actions or future plans for each item
- 3) Key Issues**
- a) Overall Departmental Strengths
 - b) Overall Departmental Concerns
 - c) Key Issues to be addressed by the department
- 4) Conclusion**

Executive Summary Submission Guidelines:

- A. The director of the department under review should review the Executive Summary to make sure it accurately represents the information reflected in the full self-study narrative and includes the key components of the Executive Summary (1-4) as outlined above.
- B. While there is no firm limit with respect to the length, the Executive Summary should not have appendices and should strive to be under fifteen pages.
- C. Departments need to submit a final draft of the Executive Summary to the Director of Assessment & Strategic Planning prior to submitting the Executive Summary to the AVP and SVPSA. Incomplete documents will be returned to the department with detailed feedback on how the summary is to be revised.
- D. Once approved, the departmental director will submit the final Executive Summary in electronic format to the Director of Assessment & Strategic Planning. The Director of A&SP will be responsible for sending the Executive Summary (along with the full self-study narrative) to the AVP and SVPSA and for uploading it as “documentation” to the Anthology Program Review Site.

Access the A&SP website to locate additional program review resources.

<http://assessment.auburn.edu/resources/program-review/>